IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims as follows.

1. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C: more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si: 2 % or less, Mn: 0.1 to 3 %, P: 0.04 % or less, S: 0.01 % or less, Cr: more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni: more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu: more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb: 0.1 to 0.8 %, V: 0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al: 0.001 to 0.1 %, N: more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O (Oxygen): 0.006 % or less, and the balance Fe and impurities, further characterized by satisfying the following formulas (1) and (2):

$$P \le 1/(11 \times Cu) \dots (1)$$

sol.Al $\le 0.4 \times N \dots (2)$

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) and (2) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

2. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C: more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si: 2 % or less, Mn: 0.1 to 3 %, P: 0.04 % or less, S: 0.01 % or less, Cr: more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni: more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu: more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb: 0.1 to 0.8 %, V: 0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al: 0.001 to 0.1 %, N: more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O (Oxygen): 0.006 % or less, and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Co: 0.05 to 5 %, Mo: 0.05 to 5 %, W: 0.05 to 10 %, Ti: 0.002 to 0.2 %, B: 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Zr: 0.0005 to 0.2 %, Hf: 0.0005 to 1 %, Ta: 0.01 to 8 %, Re: 0.01 to 8 %, Ir: 0.01 to 5 %, Pd: 0.01 to 5 %, Pt: 0.01 to 5 % and Ag: 0.01 to 5 %, and the balance Fe and impurities, further characterized by satisfying the following formulas (1) to (3).

$$P \le 1/(11 \times Cu)$$
 ...(1)
 $sol.Al \le 0.4 \times N$...(2)
 $Mo + (W/2) \le 5$...(3)

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) to (3) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

3. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C: more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si: 2 % or less, Mn: 0.1 to 3 %, P: 0.04 % or less, S: 0.01 % or less, Cr: more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni: more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu: more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb: 0.1 to 0.8 %, V: 0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al: 0.001 to 0.1 %, N: more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O (Oxygen): 0.006 % or less, and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mg: 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Ca: 0.0005 to 0.05 %, Y: 0.0005 to 0.5 %, La: 0.0005 to 0.5 %, Ce

: 0.0005 to 0.5 %, Nd : 0.0005 to 0.5 % and Sc : 0.0005 to 0.5 %, and the balance Fe and impurities, further characterized by satisfying the following formulas (1) and (2).

$$P \le 1/(11 \times Cu) \dots (1)$$

sol.A1 \le 0.4 \times N \dots (2)

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) and (2) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

4. (original) An austenitic stainless steel characterized by consisting of, by mass %, C: more than 0.05 % to 0.15 %, Si:2 % or less, Mn:0.1 to 3 %, P:0.04 % or less, S:0.01 % or less, Cr: more than 20 % to less than 28 %, Ni: more than 15 % to 55 %, Cu: more than 2 % to 6 %, Nb:0.1 to 0.8 %, V:0.02 to 1.5 %, sol. Al:0.001 to 0.1 %, N: more than 0.05 % to 0.3 % and O(Oxygen):0.006 % or less, and at least one element selected from the group consisting of Co:0.05 to 5 %, Cu: Co:0.05 to 10 %, Cu: Co:0.05 to 0.2 %, Cu: Co:0.05 to 0.05 to 0.2 %, Cu: Co:0.005 to 0.05 to 0.05 %, Cu: Cu:

$$P \le 1/(11 \times Cu) \dots (1)$$

 $sol.Al \le 0.4 \times N \dots (2)$
 $Mo + (W/2) \le 5 \dots (3)$

wherein each element symbol in the formulas (1) to (3) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

5. (currently amended) An austenitic stainless steel according to any of claims 1 to 4 claim 1, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$$O \le 1/(60 \times Cu) \dots (4)$$

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

6. (new) An austenitic stainless steel according to claim 2, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$$O \le 1/(60 \times Cu) \dots (4)$$

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

7. (new) An austenitic stainless steel according to claim 3, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$$O \le 1/(60 \times Cu) \dots (4)$$

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.

8. (new) An austenitic stainless steel according to claim 4, further characterized by satisfying the following formula (4).

$$O \le 1/(60 \times Cu) \dots (4)$$

wherein each element symbol in the formula (4) represents the content (mass %) of each element.